

**SPEECH OF**  
**PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE**  
**DURING THE**  
**HIGH LEVEL FORUM ON ASEAN @ 50**

[Delivered at Conrad Manila, Pasay City | 19 October 2017]

Kindly sit down. Thank you for the courtesy.

The Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea; former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo; former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva of the Kingdom of Thailand; Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano; His Excellency Lim Jock Seng, Foreign Minister of Brunei Darussalam; their excellencies, members of the diplomatic corps; Professor Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA; Ambassador Claro S. Cristobal, Director General Foreign Service Institute; ladies and gentlemen.

I usually reckon the importance of the event by the number of pages that [laughter] the office has prepared. So I think it covers a lot, it means to say that this must be a very important meeting. And it is.

It concerns the challenges that the ASEAN is facing in the next 100 years and there are so many things to correct and to innovate.

May I just set it aside for a moment but I will read it to do the justice to the guy who wrote it. [laughter]

First and foremost is really the challenges of the moment. One is the not so much active and cooperation between the ASEAN and the matters of trade.

We have to do more and there will be a lot of talks about this in the days to come and I will challenge the leaders of the ASEAN in our meeting --- in our coming meeting in November.

I was just shooting the breeze with somebody, and I said that if EU can do it, the world, why can't we? They have the problems about the mass migration and we have a problem here of terrorism which abounds in many ASEAN countries and of course the drug situation.

But more than that or hand-in-hand with the solutions that are offered our way, we would like to see an ASEAN that is vibrant in our trade relations with each other.

And somehow, copy. It's not wrong to copy or to add up measures that would enhance the trade between us first and maybe the next time around the world.

There are so many things that are asked of us, even the products that would enter the European market and the United States.

And it seems that the tariff is lowered or none at all. But, unfortunately, sadly, there are so many conditions or colatillas that affect the entire package of our trade relations with almost everybody.

I dream of a time when we can treat the other countries or the cartel of other nations equally on our own terms also. I hope that ASEAN will grow strong and solve the problems of the --- the serious problems confronting us.

The South China Sea is one but we are not in a hurry. And as a matter of fact, what we did was really the correct step and to avoid a confrontational talks with the almost all of the parties concerned, just ask for a limited time to solve the problem and sharing of the resources if it could be done.

For after all, it does not mean to say that if it us our economic, our fishpond, our private --- there's no such thing, as you can claim the international waters as your own.

The economic zones provided are good and our consensus and concessions that are part of the respect for each other's interest.

China has stood pat on its decision. We need not go to war for that. It's not good to add something which is already a very high-tension existing in Asia itself.

I wish more talks to come, trade. And if there is one thing that must be immediately solved is really the problem of the Malacca Strait.

Right from the west point coming in from the Indian Ocean, the ships have the choice of going up north around the Philippines between Thailand and the provinces up there or go down to the Malacca.

The Malacca used to be historically a supply route and a shipping lane that was very good for everybody. Of late, terrorism has entered the picture and we see a lot of hijackings and killing of people, and capturing hostages for ransom.

These are the things that I think closest to Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

Somehow, I would say that something has --- a drastic --- a drastic action for a very dangerous situation.

Otherwise, that part of the sea lane of trade between Australia going up north and Malaysia itself, Indonesia and the Philippines will continue to suffer the degradations of our trade and even the human being itself.

I hope to talk with the leaders of these countries and we're willing to put our resources together with theirs to find a solution.

I am a hardliner by nature. And I go for my last card always. Whenever I try to solve a problem that's --- which I --- in my own assessment and evaluation, is serious enough. I tend to deal with my last card.

That has been my character and if I get to talk to the leaders, there is one thing that I can just offer, blast them out of the seas to keep our shipping lanes open and safe.

They have committed enough piracy there. Enough money collected from ransoms, and needlessly killing people, decapitating them in front of cameras.

I think that has to stop. I just finished the war in Malaysia. And then perhaps I can refocus the entire Armed Forces to deal with this problem, once and for all.

Otherwise, we might just as well forget our sovereignty and pretend to be a nation by itself.

There so much worry about individual rights, about people being killed in the process, and even revolutionaries are cautioned or governments are cautioned to deal with them peacefully, while at the same time, they are killing my soldiers and my policemen.

These are the things that I would like to address myself now to the Western world. Please do not impose your will on us. Do not derogate our sovereignty by lecturing on us, the civilities of a country which we turn a democratic state.

It is not --- maybe to your satisfaction --- that you do not like what we are doing but you know there are things which we have to do because we have to do it. Or not, then you can do it for us.

Tell us if you are ready to deal with the problem, I'd be happy to order my soldiers and my policemen just to relax.

And if any western country is interested to do it the civilized way, then come. I am inviting you to join the fray. And I would be glad to appoint you the lead role in the problem.

Otherwise, if you cannot stop interfering, at least be educated in your assessment. For after all, all countries suffer from social problems.

Indeed, there are so many social injustice. Philippines is no exception. Plenty. But we try to correct it along the way with meager resources and certainly not or cannot adopt the way they term it as the principle doctrines on how to deal with a democratic problem in a democratic state.

It's a social problem. You do not come here upon the invitation of some NGOs and the opposite political parties and look only on the number of extrajudicial killings which has not --- even have an investigation if it is really one or not.

In the style of --- in my country today, when somebody there lies dead, it is always an extrajudicial killing. If there is no suspect that can be pointed at, it is extrajudicial killing.

All killings whether perpetrated by a state or by the ordinary citizen, is always extrajudicial. In the sense that it is not the property of a court and to discuss the matter of how human being should be killed or not.

That's not the point. The point is look at the social problem. For example, during the time of, [with due respect, ma'am], the drug problem is already there.

During the time of President Aquino, it got worse and it is still there. And when I was the President, it was there. And yet, early on we're being reprimanded publicly by the highest officials of other lands as if we are a colony.

You know guys, we have the United Nations. If you think, you have qualms against me, go to the United Nations, make your representations, state your complaint and ask the body to investigate us for being a member of that organization.

If you begin to impose your values on me and you try to correct things not our way and it is not really applicable, then we have a problem here.

And other people pretending to represent the sentiments of a certain region, a certain organization, which are taken at face value as the truth because they only considered how many were killed. But the question is why were they killed? Why are there victims? So what's the reason for killing them?

You know, when you are a policeman and you are called suddenly for assistance, and you see somebody sprawled there, wounded and dying, so you are interested to get the dying declaration because a person is about to die, they say that's the truth.

When I say that, "You do not ask what weapon was used, what method, what doctrine of republicanism, ideology do you follow? They would all just say, "Who killed you?"

Never mind about what kind of weapon. You would know that when you see a stab wound, a slash or a single bullet in the head.

So when you come here, do not just say that this... You count the number of allegedly unlawful killing, extrajudicial.

If you really want to help, find out why they have been killed. So if there is shortage of investigation, follow-ups and all, then you help us then try to correct us if there is really a correction that we needed. That is what I mean.

Now, they say that I have a bad mouth, a foul mouth. Correct. I do it purposely. I am not the type that would just blurt out epithets, curses, and slang --- to use the slang, street language. I do it for their sheer ignorance.

When you say, "Philippines, you do this, otherwise, you might lose your membership in the UN." And to think they are just the NGOs.

But we never heard any official disclaimer of their allegations that they represent the feelings of the European Union or the people of Europe. And it becomes a problem.

You fall short of... You know, you cannot expel a member of the UN by just a single statement. That is an insult to a country.

And when you say that you've --- you want to expel me, that is a very serious matter and it would reach eventually in the social --- in the Security Council of the UN.

It will be there put on the table and they will discuss. And one vote of the permanent member says, "It is not good," then there is no expulsion.

Do you really think that Russia and China would go for it? Expel the Philippines? One vote from either of the permanent members would... It goes kaput.

And that is why I am very thankful for this opportunity. I do not want to lecture on you. I do not deliver speech as a matter of practice because I am not up to it.

But I usually talk to my audience or just discuss what I would like to convey to you. That is my style.

I do not go around and say, "It is time that the Philippines is going to rise from the ashes of poverty and we will..." [laughter]

I have not been trained to do it that way. I was just trained to just talk, pour your hearts out, convey your message and the --- watch your mouth.

With you in front of me, I would be the most courteous, ever the most condescending President in front of you.

But I also appreciate the time that you gave me so that you'll understand that the problem is serious and we're trying to solve it our way.

Now, officially, I have pulled out the military, the Armed Forces and the police out of the picture.

I just gave this thing about drugs to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency. Whether they can cope up or not.

I... Maybe I can explain it to you in a longer but you know, we have time constraint. It's almost dinner time. I know you haven't had your --- even your merienda yet so I said...

May I be allowed just to read my speech. It will take about just two minutes.

I wish to thank the organizers of this High-Level Forum on ASEAN at 50 for inviting me to this very meaningful gathering.

The panel discussion conducted earlier by ASEAN's eminent leaders have shown us in retrospect the evolution of our regional community and our continuing story as a family of nations.

Indeed, their substantial contributions to the development of their respective nations and the growth of the ASEAN community will steer us towards the realization of a common vision and the identity [for] our region.

The Philippines' chairmanship of ASEAN in 2017 coincides with the 50th anniversary.

As a founding member of ASEAN, it is an honor for our country to lead our community as we chart our course towards the future.

The ASEAN story is a remarkable account of determination, vision, unity and cooperation. It was born in 1967 during one of the most turbulent and challenging periods in our region's history.

Comprising a mix of diverse languages, cultures, colonial experiences, forms of government and political systems, ASEAN was seen by some political observers as an experiment bound to fail. Yet, 50 years later, ASEAN has become one of the world's most successful regional communities.

ASEAN's crucial role as the fulcrum that balances stability and security in the region is a testament [to] its success in the past 50 years.

ASEAN was successful not just in bringing together a regional community, but also in shaping the relationships among major players in the [Asia] Pacific region.

ASEAN at 50 is not a complete story, nor [is it] a finished product. It is a steadily evolving pursuit towards the realization of our vision of a peaceful, stable and resilient community with the capability to respond effectively to the challenges within and outside our borders.

In January this year, in my home city of Davao, we assumed Chairmanship of ASEAN with a declaration that the Philippines will remain steadfast in upholding our shared values and aspirations.

Part of this is the promotion of our common interests through mutual cooperation and constructive engagements with Dialogue Partners.

At the 30th ASEAN Summit in April, the Leaders of ASEAN re-affirmed the commitment to enhance regional integration, respond to the challenges of climate change and natural disasters, and address transnational crimes such as the proliferation of illegal drugs, trafficking in persons, terrorism and violent extremism.

We continue to address non-traditional security concerns through ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus, and active engagement with our Dialogue Partners.

The recent developments in the Korean Peninsula have tested ASEAN's resolve to keep the peace and ensure the security of our region.

That is why we remain committed in working closely with our international partners in maintaining stability in the Korean Peninsula.

On the economic front, we continue to work towards bigger, more open and rules-based market where businesses, especially micro, small and medium enterprises, can thrive.

We also launched the first [ASEAN] Roll-On Roll-Off (RORO) Sea Route which connects the Davao and General Santos Ports in Mindanao to Bitung Port in North Sulawesi.

It is a clear manifestation of our commitment to stimulate trade, tourism and other areas of development among our ASEAN member-states.

When the Leaders of ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners meet in November for the 31st ASEAN Summit, we intend to reaffirm our commitment to maintaining regional peace and stability, pursuing maritime security and cooperation, advancing inclusive innovation-led growth, strengthening the region's resiliency, and promoting ASEAN as a global player [and] a model of regionalism.

We would like to see substantial progress in negotiations [for the establishment] of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

As the Philippines completes its duty as Chair of ASEAN by the end of the year, we remain optimistic that the priorities we have set will not cease as we pass on the chairmanship to our successor.

It is our shared hope [that] our gains will become part of our continuing commitment to ASEAN and the principles for which it stands for.

I therefore call on our fellow ASEAN leaders to empower our peoples by making them understand the importance of ASEAN in their lives, [how] its past gains have directly contributed to their well-being, and how the realization of its goals will make their lives better.

Together, let us cultivate [in] our peoples a sense of ownership – for them to own the ASEAN story as their story, and to see ASEAN's future as their own.

Thank you. [applause]

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